THE

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WHAT's THE HOUR?

IF the firſt who aſked this queſtion was an idle man, at leaſt we may preſume that he was the inhabitant of a country where idleneſs had ceaſed to be general; for people are already acquainted with the value and employment of time before they begin to meaſure it. Nevertheleſs how many hours have periſhed unperceived, ever ſince mankind begun to count them! From his ever-flowing urn, time pours them out into a ſieve; and it frequently happens that they all paſs through. Happy the man who has employed ſome of their number in aiding a friend, conſoling the child of ſorrow, doing a little ſervice to his fellow-men! The hours thus employed will remain in the ſieve; and they add much more to the duration of life than the others.

The Egyptians firſt taught the Greeks to aſk "*What's the hour?*" But from whom did the Egyptians learn the queſtion? It is left in the darkneſs of remote antiquity: nor was it until a few centuries anterior to the vulgar æra, that a ſomewhat ſatisfactory anſwer was returned to it. A long time was required before people could venture to ſay all that was to be ſaid on that ſimple queſtion, "*What's the hour?*"

According to Pliny, it was Anaximander who erected the firſt gnomon that was ſeen in Greece. After a few centuries, ſun-dials paſſed over from Greece to Sicily; and Valerius Meſſala carried to Rome that which had ſtood at Catana. Under the conſulate of Scipio Naſica, they were

ſucceeded by hydraulic time-meaſurers. How many difficulties was it neceſſary to ſurmount, before mankind could even learn "*what was the hour!*"

The Calif Haroun-el-Raſchid ſent a ſtriking clock to Charlemagne, who had not before poſſeſſed a ſingle one in all the cities of his vaſt empire. During the night, men perambulated the ſtreets to make known the hour to thoſe who were in bed. The cuſtom is ſtill continued in London, where, beſides, each man has his watch to conſult: and yet we are continually aſking, "*What's the hour?*"

There muſt certainly be in thoſe words a certain charm, which does not ariſe from the bare deſire of exactly knowing the time of the day: and I lay it down as an axiom that the perſon who inquires reſpecting the preſent hour has his thoughts leſs intent upon it than upon ſome ſome future hour which he expects. This approximation of two different times produces another in the mind: by recalling to memory what we intend to do, we reflect with greater attention on what we are actually doing. The queſtion "*What's the hour?*" is therefore a principle of obſervation which imparts activity to thought, gives motion to life, and a direction to our projects. How many perſons do we ſee, who know not either what they think, or what they do, or what they purpoſe, merely becauſe they do not ſufficiently often aſk, "*What's the hour?*"

I am perſuaded that the man who ſhould write thoſe words over every door in his houſe, and keep them conſtantly preſent to his thoughts, would not ſuffer a ſingle minute of the day to be loſt. To form a proper eſtimate of the value of time, it is neceſſary to meaſure it. We then wiſh to employ every moment; and we condemn ourſelves for any neglect, as for an error. Thoſe words recall us to life, as the voice of zephyr recalls the ſtagnant juices in the vegetable world into vernal circulation.

How important to the fathers and mothers of families, and to inſtructors ſurrounded with their children, not to overlook the ſovereign efficacy of that queſtion! In the firſt ſtages of education, each moment gives birth to new ideas, to new cares. There is not an hour to be loſt; not an hour to be entirely employed in the ſame manner. Think well on't; reflect "*What's the hour?*"

The hoary ſenior and the blooming youth equally aſk the ſame queſtion: but the former foreſees; the latter enjoys; and they both act according to the dictates of nature.

Thoſe

Thoſe words, " *What's the hour?*" are a leſſon for all ages.

The huſbandman, exhauſted with his agricultural toil, deſcries the diſtant roof of his cottage peeping through the foliage in which it ſtands emboſomed. Imagination inſtantly paints to him his wife, his children, their eager haſte in running forth to meet him when they hear in the evening the tread of his horſes or the bark of his faithful dog. He immediately aſks himſelf " *What's the hour?*" His queſtion is anſwered by the ſhadow of the aged oak which rears its head on the margin of his field: new vigour braces his ſinews: new courage pervades his boſom; the earth offers leſs reſiſtance to his efforts; and the preſent hour ſeems abridged by the expectation of that which is to come.

That man leaning on his couch, bending under the burden of accumulated years, and who with trembling hand puts aſide a few ſilver hairs which the wind had blown over his nearly-extinguiſhed eyes, was once young, vigorous, active, and handſome. That woman paſſing near him, whoſe ſhrunk and withered countenance reminds us of a mummy, has a thouſand times been compared to the Graces. Yon babe, who ſo peacefully ſlumbers on the boſom of his mother, will one day be ſeated in a great arm-chair, his feet extended on a large cuſhion, his head weighed down on his cheſt, while he views the children of his children in the ſame ſituation in which we now behold himſelf. The ſucceſſive changes which take place in us are obſervable at the principal epochs of our life: but their continuity is never interrupted; and it thus imperceptibly fills up the intervals which ſeparate childhood, adoleſcency, maturity and old age. Each hour bears the imprint of revolving time, which creates, perfects, extinguiſhes, and deſtroys. Under this relation, the queſtions, " What was I? What am I? What am I to be?" are all included in " *What's the hour?*"

When a man has performed a laudable action—and we oftener have than uſe the opportunity of doing ſuch—if he was to look at his watch, the mark of that hour would become a pleaſing leſſon for the future, and a ſtill more pleaſing record of the paſt. Happy the mortal who ſhould in this manner, minute by minute, make the complete circuit of the dial, and could thus frequently aſk himſelf, " *What's the hour?*"

A Deſcription of the City of Waſhington.

By Isaac Weld, Jun.

(Concluded from Page 468.)

THE capitol is now building upon the moſt elevated ſpot of ground in the city, which happens to be in a very central ſituation. From this ſpot there is a complete view of every part of the city, and alſo of the adjacent country. In the capitol are to be ſpacious apartments for the accommodation of Congreſs; in it alſo are to be the principal public offices in the executive department of the government, together with the courts of juſtice. The plan on which this building is begun is grand and extenſive; the expence of building it is eſtimated at a million of dollars, equal to two hundred and twenty-five thouſand pounds ſterling.

The houſe for the reſidence of the Preſident ſtands north-weſt of the capitol, at the diſtance of about one mile and a half. It is ſituated upon a riſing ground not far from the Patowmac, and commands a moſt beautiful proſpect of the river, and of the rich country beyond it. One hundred acres of ground, towards the river, are left adjoining to the houſe for pleaſure grounds. South of this there is to be a large park or mall, which is to run in an eaſterly direction from the river to the capitol. The buildings on either ſide of this mall are all to be elegant in their kind; amongſt the number it is propoſed to have houſes built at the public expence for the accommodation of the foreign miniſters, &c. On the eaſtern branch a large ſpot is laid out for a marine hoſpital and gardens. Various other parts are appointed for churches, theatres, colleges, &c. The ground in general, within the limits of the city, is agreeably undulated; but none of the riſings are ſo great as to become objects of inconvenience in a town. The ſoil is chiefly of a yellowiſh clay mixed with gravel. There are numbers of excellent ſprings in the city, and water is readily had in moſt places by digging wells. Here are two ſtreams likewiſe, which run through the city, Reedy Branch and Tiber Creek*. The perpendicular

* Upon the granting poſſeſſion of waſte lands to any perſon, commonly called the *location* of lands, it is uſual to give particular names to different ſpots, and alſo to the creeks and rivers. On the original location of the ground now allotted for the ſeat of the federal city, this creek received the name of Tiber Creek, and the identical

perpendicular height of the ſource of the latter, above the level of the tide, is two hundred and thirty-ſix feet.

By the regulations publiſhed, it was ſettled that all the houſes ſhould be built of brick or ſtone; the walls to be thirty feet high, and to be built parallel to the line of the ſtreet, but either upon it or withdrawn from it, as ſuited the taſte of the builder. However, numbers of wooden habitations have been built; but the different owners have all been cautioned againſt conſidering them as permanent. They are to be allowed for a certain term only, and then deſtroyed. Three commiſſioners, who reſide on the ſpot, are appointed by the Preſident, with a ſalary, for the purpoſe of ſuperintending the public and other buildings, and regulating every thing pertaining to the city.

The only public buildings carrying on as yet, are the Preſident's houſe, the capitol, and a large hotel. The Preſident's houſe, which is nearly completed on the outſide, is two ſtories high, and built of free ſtone. The principal room in it is of an oval form. This is undoubtedly the handſomeſt building in the country, and the architecture of it is much extolled by the people, who have never ſeen any thing ſuperior; but it will not bear a critical examination. Many perſons find fault with it, as being too large and too ſplendid for the reſidence of any one perſon in a republican country; and certainly it is a ridiculous habitation for a man who receives a ſalary that amounts to no more than 5625l. ſterling per annum, and in a country where the expences of living are far greater than they are even in London.

The hotel is a large building of brick, ornamented with ſtone; it ſtands between the Preſident's houſe and the capitol. In the beginning of the year 1796, when I laſt ſaw it, it was roofed in, and every exertion making to have it finiſhed with the utmoſt expedition. It is any thing but beautiful. The capitol, at the ſame period, was raiſed only a very little way above the foundation.

The ſtone, which the Preſident's houſe is built with, and ſuch as will be uſed for all the public buildings, is very ſimilar in appearance to that found at Portland in England; but I was informed by one of the ſculptors, who had frequently worked the Portland ſtone in England, that it is of a much

ſuperior

identical ſpot of ground on which the capitol now ſtands was called Rome. This anecdote is related by many as a certain prognoſtic of the future magnificence of this city, which is to be, as it were, a ſecond Rome.

ſuperior quality, and it will bear to be cut as fine as marble, and is not liable to be injured by rain or froſt. On the banks of the Patowmac they have inexhauſtible quarries of this ſtone; good ſpecimens of common marble have alſo been found; and there is in various parts of the river abundance of excellent ſlate, paving ſtone, and lime ſtone. Good coal may alſo be had.

The private houſes are all plain buildings; moſt of them have been built on ſpeculation, and ſtill remain empty. The greateſt number, at any one place, is at Green Leafs Point, on the main river, juſt above the entrance of the eaſtern branch. This ſpot has been looked upon by many as the moſt convenient one for trade; but others prefer the ſhore of the eaſtern branch, on account of the ſuperiority of the harbour, and the great depth of the water near the ſhore. There are ſeveral other favourite ſituations, the choice of any one of which is a mere matter of ſpeculation at preſent. Some build near the capitol, as the moſt convenient place for the reſidence of members of Congreſs, ſome near the Preſident's houſe; others again prefer the weſt end of the city, in the neighbourhood of George Town, thinking that as trade is already eſtabliſhed in that place, it muſt be from thence that it will extend into the city. Were the houſes that have been built ſituated in one place altogether, they would make a very reſpectable appearance, but ſcattered about as they are, a ſpectator can ſcarcely perceive any thing like a town. Excepting the ſtreets and avenues, and a ſmall part of the ground adjoining public buildings, the whole place is covered with trees. To be under the neceſſity of going through a deep wood for one or two miles, perhaps, in order to ſee a next door neighbour, and in the ſame city, is a curious, and, I believe, a novel circumſtance. The number of inhabitants in the city, in the ſpring of 1796, amounted to about 5000, including artificers, who formed by far the largeſt part of that number. Numbers of ſtrangers are continually paſſing and repaſſing through a place which affords ſuch an extenſive field for ſpeculation.

In addition to what has already been ſaid upon the ſubject, I have only to obſerve, that notwithſtanding all that has been done at the city, and the large ſums of money which have been expended, there are numbers of people in the United States, living to the north of the Potowmac, particularly in Philadelphia, who are ſtill very averſe to the removal of the ſeat of government thither, and are doing all in their power to check the progreſs of the buildings of the city, and to

prevent the Congreſs from meeting there at the appointed time. In the ſpring of 1796, when I was laſt on the ſpot, the building of the capitol was abſolutely at a ſtand for want of money; the public lots were at a very low price, and the commiſſioners were unwilling to diſpoſe of them; in conſequence they made an application to Congreſs, praying the Houſe to guarantee a loan of three hundred thouſand dollars, without which they could not go on with the public buildings, except they diſpoſed of the lots to great diſadvantage, and to the ultimate injury of the city; ſo ſtrong, however, was the oppoſition, that the petition was ſuffered to lie on the table unattended to for many weeks! nor was the prayer of it complied with until a number of gentlemen, that were deeply intereſted in the improvement of the city, went round to the different members, and made intereſt with them in perſon to give their aſſent to the meaſure. Theſe people, who are oppoſed to the building of the city of Waſhington, maintain, that it can never become a town of any importance, and that all ſuch as think to the contrary have been led aſtray by the repreſentations of a few enthuſiaſtic perſons; they go ſo far even as to aſſert, that the people to the eaſtward will never ſubmit to ſee the ſeat of government removed ſo far from them, and the Congreſs aſſembled in a place little better than a foreſt, where it will be impoſſible to procure information upon commercial points; finally, they inſiſt, that if the removal from Philadelphia ſhould take place, a ſeparation of the ſtates will inevitably follow. This is the language held forth; but their oppoſition in reality ariſes from that jealouſy which narrow minded people in trade are but too apt to entertain of each other when their intereſts claſh together. Theſe people wiſh to cruſh the city of Waſhington while it is yet in its infancy, becauſe they know, that if the ſeat of government is transferred thither, the place will thrive, and enjoy a conſiderable portion of that trade which is centered at preſent in Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York. It is idle, however, to imagine that this will injure their different towns; on the contrary, although a proportion of that trade which they enjoy at preſent ſhould be drawn from them, yet the increaſe of population in that part of the country, which they muſt naturally ſupply, will be ſuch, that their trade on the whole will, in all probability, be found far more extenſive after the federal city is eſtabliſhed than it ever was before.

A large majority, however, of the people in the United States is deſirous that the removal of the ſeat of government

ſhould

ſhould take place; and there is little doubt that it will take place at the appointed time. The diſcontents indeed, which an oppoſite meaſure would give riſe to in the ſouth could not but be alarming, and if they did not occaſion a total ſeparation of the ſouthern from the northern ſtates, yet they would certainly materially deſtroy the harmony which has hitherto exiſted between them.

Sketch of the preſent State of Society and Manners in Plymouth.

[From the Monthly Magazine.]

PLYMOUTH is ſituated at the mouth of the river Plym, but not immediately at its junction with the ocean. The town itſelf is ill conſtructed; the ſtreets narrow, inconvenient, and ſteep. Its extent is conſiderable, and it is very populous. Its trade depends principally upon ſhipping, and the royal navy. But though the town itſelf has nothing to boaſt, the contiguous country is extremely beautiful; and poſſeſſes a pleaſing interchange of hill and dale. The neighbouring proſpects are very grand and intereſting. About one mile from Plymouth is the town of Stonehouſe, the reſort of faſhion; and about a mile further, the populous and extenſive town of Dock, ſo named from the famous arſenal there eſtabliſhed. Theſe three towns, with ſmall interruptions, now nearly form an unbroken chain of communication, and may be almoſt conſidered as one. As the inhabitants of theſe places conſiſt, in a great meaſure, of the navy and army, there is much fluctuation; and a large part may be conſidered as a tide conſtantly flowing, and as conſtantly ebbing. To give an exact deſcription of ſhifting objects is difficult, which paſs before they can gain a fixed character. The more ſtationary inhabitants, indeed, aſſume a more defined appearance, while the running ſtream compoſed of homogeneous particles paſſes on in a general maſs. Although theſe towns are ſo contiguous, yet from the different occupations of the more fixed inhabitants an obvious diſcrimination of external character is viſible. It is therefore not unuſual for one of Plymouth to ſay, Such a one is a Dock perſon; and a ſimilar marking may no doubt be ſtriking to the other. Collective members of ſociety purſuing the ſame objects, or engaged in ſimilar occupations, readily acquire a ſtrong and appropriate character. Profeſſions, trades, and other em-

ployments, give peculiarities of a very deciſive outline and colouring, and hence this apparent diſtinction ariſes. War or peace produce alternate variations in theſe towns. The former gives life, the latter torpor. The great object is to make the moſt of circumſtances: yet, amidſt the buſtle of commerce, and the ſtorm of war, literature is not altogether neglected. There are ſeveral reading ſocieties eſtabliſhed in each of theſe places. There are ſome literary characters, and as much encouragement is given to mental improvement, as in other places of the ſame extent of population. Amongſt the inhabitants are to be found a proportionate ſhare of perſons of ſound ſenſe and acuteneſs.

Religion has its partiſans of various denominations. The churches are few in proportion to the inhabitants, and of courſe the clergy. Sectaries are numerous. If the population of a place is ſo large that the churches cannot contain the people, this muſt be a natural conſequence.

Politics at one time partook of that fury which ever accompanies the heat of party; particularly when individual intereſts are the ſecret ſpring, and public good the pretence of diſpute. But that diſguſting heat is happily ſubſided into a languor, which is far preferable to the animoſities of political fury. To tell and to hear the news forms much of our employment.

A people may be deſcribed by negatives. It has been obſerved, that the ſcenery round this country is naturally beautiful. But this is rather in the diſpoſition of the parts of the landſcape by the hand of nature, than the embelliſhments of culture. The hills ſwell delightfully, and the vales ſweetly diverſify. But there is a great deficiency of trees; ſo that the fineſt interchanges of theſe oppoſites are but too bare of thoſe engaging and grand ornaments of vegetation. Homer perhaps would have called the people of this neighbourhood tree-haters; for in his deſcription of localities he has, "abounding in doves, fertile in ſoil, trainers of the horſe," &c. Certain it is, that within two miles of Plymouth, trees ſeem ſtudiouſly to be diſdained. This is not to be attributed to its proximity to the ſea; for in ſome happy ſpots, where chance has placed a few, they thrive very well. The higher ſituations, expoſed to ſea-blaſts, are undoubtedly unfavourable to them. Yet even here, the beautiful and elegant plane may be obſerved to luxuriate in different elevated ſites, where a few ſpecimens are to be found. The hedge-rows too are all kept. Thus, the moſt bounteous gifts of nature are counteracted. After two miles, trees are

more numerous; woods, groves, and copſes, abound. The delightful vale of Bickleigh abounds in romantic and picturesque ſcenery. It is Wales in miniature, diverſified by mountains, tranſparent rivers pouring in torrents, or ſweetly rippling in murmurs, intermixed with rude fragments of rock, and inviting cultivation. The deeply embo-ſomed village of Tamerton, the pleaſing ſcenery of Plympton, and many ſimilar ſpots, are highly inviting.

Country reſidences are very thinly ſcattered in the vicinity of theſe towns: you may proceed two or three miles in either direction, and yet meet with few of thoſe ornamented villas which are frequent in the adjacent country of other populous towns. This is a corroborating indication of the preceding remark, that a taſte for rural objects is not very prevalent here; and it is the more unaccountable, as fortunes ſuddenly raiſed are often expended in the diſplay of magnificence, of which thoſe who have no reliſh for the enjoyment, conceive that a country-houſe is a neceſſary appendage. Hence the citizen, when his town-reſidence is ſufficiently inflated with coſt and ſplendour, pours forth the overcharge in rural oſtentation. Hence he is induced to regale in the ſhade of his Lombardy poplars, and in the duſty atmoſphere of high roads; or raiſes a cumbrous load of unoccupied buildings to ſtare round miles of circumference.

Of the muſical taſte of this place ſome judgment may be formed, when it is underſtood that annual concerts are ſupported, though with ſome languor, by ſubſcription. But in proportion as places increaſe in diſtance from the capital, the arts and embelliſhments of life are likely to be cultivated with leſs ardour. There are to be found, however, individuals of talent and ingenuity, who purſue various tracts of ſcience, literature, and philoſophy.

We have, as is uſual in other places, numbers, who are content to float down the ſtream of pleaſure and amuſement. Hence public places meet the ſame encouragement as in other towns of equal extent, ſufficient for our ſatisfaction, and more than ſufficient for our prudence.

The ſea ſupplies our markets with fiſh of various kinds; but the greater part is engroſſed, and conveyed to London and Bath for ſale. But this is not becauſe we have no reliſh for the pleaſures of the table; but becauſe epicuriſm there pays a higher premium. We muſt not be conſidered as void of taſte in any reſpect. Some of us love ſcience, and many prefer turbot and veniſon. Tradition reports on good

authority,

authority, that Quin uſed to pay an annual viſit to this place to eat dory, ſtewed in claret, in its greateſt perfection.

The dock-yard is a place of great curioſity. The ſight of the different proceſſes employed in naval architecture may afford much pleaſure to the ingenious, and much gratification to thoſe who ſeek amuſement in any ſhape.

The garriſon has a rampart of conſiderable extent. From this the views are various, and extremely beautiful. Mount Edgecumbe is remarkable for the variety and grandeur of its proſpects; commanding at once towns, docks, and navies, intermixed with a great variety of ſimple and rural nature; all terminated by diſtant mountains. Saltram, the ſeat of Lord Boringdon, has alſo much intereſt.

Narrative of M. Sonnini's ſingular Adventure with a Troop of Bedouin Arabs in Egypt.

WHEN we had come within five or ſix hundred yards of the convent, Huſſein went on before, in order to procure us admittance, which it is very difficult to obtain. I was at ſome diſtance, and the reſt of our party had lagged a conſiderable way behind. A troop of Bedouins on horſeback ſuddenly darted out from behind the walls. I did not at firſt diſtinguiſh them in the midſt of the cloud of duſt which they raiſed; but as ſoon as they were diſcernible, I perceived the quality and number of the people with whom we had to deal. I inſtantly turned about, and, mounted upon an excellent horſe, with which I was in no danger of being overtaken, I quickly rejoined my companions, who, from the back of their camels, had alſo perceived the horſemen. I found them on foot, and drawn up in a cloſe body. I diſmounted inſtantly, and encouraged them to make a vigorous defence. Our whole number was ſix, and on three only of theſe could any dependance be placed. Two natives of the country could afford no great aſſiſtance; and the draughtſman, who was young and inexperienced, did not know how to diſcharge a muſket.

The firmneſs of a handful of men, alone in the midſt of a ſandy deſert, and wholly unprotected, overawed a ſquadron, amounting to near a hundred Bedouin Arabs. Hence a judgment may be formed, how little is to be dreaded from ſuch enemies, whoſe courage goes no farther than to unite in numerous bodies, in order to commit, with impunity, every

kind of depredation, and thus carry on a cowardly war of pillage. Although they rode up to us at full gallop, they halted ſuddenly at the diſtance of an hundred yards, and called out to us not to fire: I anſwered by deſiring them not to advance. They remained for ſome moments, as if doubtful how to act; during which time we could obſerve they were holding a conſultation. They then divided themſelves into four bodies, three of which ſet off at full ſpeed, and ſtationed themſelves on our flanks and in our rear. This manœuvre, which it was not poſſible for us to prevent, diſconcerted my two ſoldiers; and, in ſpite of all my entreaties, I could not prevail on them to ſtand on their defence. We had good guns, and a conſiderable number of cartridges. I knew that the moment the Bedouins ſaw one of their party fall, they would betake themſelves to flight; and I was certain that our firſt diſcharge would bring ſeveral of them to the ground. I did not reflect, it is true, that we were in the midſt of an immenſe deſert; and that, if our enemies fled, it would be only to return again ſoon, in order to overpower us by thouſands, and, by maſſacreing us all, to revenge the death of their comrades. I threw down my gun, in vexation at being compelled to ſubmit to ſuch a banditti. They immediately came upon us, and without even taking the trouble of diſmounting, they ſtripped us in an inſtant. Money, arms, clothes, proviſions; all our property, in ſhort, was taken. They left me my long under waiſtcoat and my breeches; my companions were ſtripped to their ſhirts. My turban having alſo been taken, my head, bare and ſhaved, was expoſed to the burning heat of the ſun, and pained me exceſſively; and although I covered it as well as I could with both my hands, this precaution afforded me no relief. The booty was ſpread out upon the ſand. A ſcore of Arabs on foot, whom we had not before perceived, from their having been concealed behind a heap of ſtones, now joined the others; and the whole party, not without noiſy quarrels, began to divide the ſpoil.

This ſcene would have furniſhed a ſkilful artiſt with a ſtriking ſubject for a picture. On one ſide he might have repreſented the gang of robbers covered with duſt, of a black or tawny complexion, their countenances parched as the ſands which their robberies render ſtill more dreadful, quarrelling about their booty; in the midſt of them my old ſervant endeavouring, with great *ſang-froid*, to ſeize upon ſome of the articles of which we had been plundered, and occaſionally making ſnatches at them: in the fore-ground

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the grenadier, motionleſs and confounded: the two Egyptians ſtupidly gazing at one another: myſelf in the back-ground, biting my nails, with a look of anger and indignation: and laſtly, the draughtſman, weeping aloud, and anſwering me with ſobs, when I aſked him if he had met with any ill uſage: "No, Sir, but what can we now get to eat?"

Tired of being the ſpectator of a ſcene in which it was unneceſſary for me to exhibit myſelf, I was proceeding towards the monaſtery, in hopes of finding Huſſein, who had repaired thither, when I heard myſelf called, and immediately found myſelf laid hold of by the arm. It was the chief of the robbers, an Arab of the deſerts of Nubia, for his face was as black as a negro's. Without ſaying a word, he carried me back into the midſt of his troop. I took it for granted that he was diſpleaſed that I had any of my clothes left, or that, upon conſideration, he had reſolved to take away my life. How great was my aſtoniſhment when I ſaw this chief carefully inquiring after the clothes and property which belonged particularly to me; and after having been a rather too active valet-de-chambre in undreſſing me, once more perform that office, but with more civility, in aſſiſting me to put on the different parts of my dreſs, at the ſame time returning me my purſe, and reſtoring my arms. In the mean while, other Bedouins rendered the ſame ſervice to my companions, equally aſtoniſhed at an adventure as ſingular as it was unexpected.

This was effected by the ſpirited conduct of Huſſein. While he was near the walls of the convent, whither he had repaired, his gun hanging over his ſhoulder, ſome Arabs had been detached to detain him, and had ſeized his piece; but Huſſein, after a long conteſt, ſucceeded in leaping on horſe-back behind a Bedouin, and reaching the place where moſt of the band of robbers was collected, "Arabs," ſaid he, addreſſing himſelf to their chiefs, "you have ſtripped a man entruſted to my protection, and for whoſe ſafety I will ſtake my life; a man with whom I have eaten, who has ſlept in my tent, and has become my brother! Never again can I enter that tent; never again dare I return to my camp; I muſt henceforth renounce all hopes of the pleaſure of embracing my wife and children: Arabs, take my life, or reſtore to my brother every article of his property." This harangue, accompanied with the moſt determined look, and delivered in the moſt reſolute tone, made an impreſſion upon the Bedouins. Huſſein had ſnatched his gun from the perſon who held it, and while they were conſulting together, levelled it

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at the principal chief of the banditti, reſolved to ſhoot him in caſe of refuſal, and thus expoſed himſelf to be butchered rather than conſent that we ſhould receive the ſmalleſt injury. Our conductor was well known: the Arabs were convinced from his decided character, that he would put his threats in execution; and partly from fear, and partly from deference, the black chief conſented to reſtore every thing they had taken from me; and this was performed with a fidelity truly admirable. Indeed, when any thing conſidered valuable by the perſon who had ſtolen it was mentioned, it was neceſſary to urge the claim; but no ſooner did the chief inſiſt upon its reſtitution, than the article was inſtantly forthcoming. This diſcipline among ſuch a people, and in a place where we could not expect to have found an inſtance of it, appeared to me extremely aſtoniſhing. The chief aſked me what part of my property was ſtill miſſing; on my naming an article, he aſcended a ſmall eminence, and cried out: "Arabs, ſuch a thing is not reſtored, let it be produced." If his orders were not immediately obeyed, he added: "Come, Arabs, be quick;" and the article claimed was delivered to me in an inſtant. The chief then mentioned another part of the property ſtolen, and it was reſtored to me in the ſame manner.

Two hours elapſed before this ſort of inventory of my effects was completed: every thing was given back to me, except my money, of which I received but a very ſmall part; but this was not the fault of the two ſheicks. Huſſein, in particular, required that I ſhould count in his preſence the ſequins that had been returned. The Arabs, in whoſe eyes my purſe appeared a valuable prize, and who had divided moſt of its contents, anxiouſly awaited the reſult of this reckoning, and their embarraſſment ceaſed when they heard me declare that I had received all my money. Thinking myſelf fortunate to get off ſo well, I readily made a ſacrifice of two thirds of what I poſſeſſed, rather than incur the hatred and the vengeance of the honeſt thieves by whom I was ſurrounded. I did not forget that I was ſtill in the deſert, and had every thing to dread, ſhould I fall a ſecond time into their hands, or meet with another troop of robbers, to whom they might give information of our route, and who might poſſibly treat us with leſs complaiſance.

It was not enough for theſe banditti to appear juſt, they muſt alſo ſhew themſelves polite. The chief brought me his horſe, and inſiſted upon my mounting it, to ride the ſhort diſtance from the place where we were, to the monaſtery, while he followed me on foot. Some of the other Arabs

paid the ſame compliment to my companions, each of them walking in like manner by the ſide of his horſe. When we approached the walls, we ſaw coming down by a rope, baſkets of bread, and wooden platters filled with lentils. Forming a circle on the ſands, we partook of theſe proviſions with people who a moment before appeared as our enemies. After the repaſt, ſome of them approached me with frankneſs, and even with a kind of cordiality, thanking Heaven that I had met with no injury; and with a degree of intereſt, blamed me for my temerity in undertaking a journey into the deſert, which they acknowledged was the reſort only of thieves and banditti. They did not fail to offer up their prayers with great devotion, after having covered their arms and legs with ſand, for want of the water neceſſary for the ablutions preſcribed by their law. Mahomet, himſelf an Arab, foreſaw how very frequently his followers might have occaſion to traverſe the deſerts, and directed that whenever water could not be procured, ſand might be uſed as a ſubſtitute.

The ſheick of the robbers applied to me for a gratification, obſerving, that he had kept none of my money, and that he had, beſides, taken a great deal of trouble to have my property reſtored. I meant to have given him the ſequins I had left; but Huſſein, ſeeing this, flew into a violent paſſion, and proteſted that he would not ſuffer me to give him a ſingle medine. And, in fact, although I endeavoured to deceive his vigilance, I could find no opportunity of making my preſent to the other ſheick.

ACCOUNT *of a* REPUBLIC *of* JEWS.

A Part of Malabar, (ſays Mr. Pennant) was diſtinguiſhed for having been the reſidence of a republic of Jews, part of the tribe of Manaſſeh, who had been carried into captivity by Nebuchadnezzar, who ſent numbers of them to this diſtant place. Their hiſtory ſays that they amounted to 20,000, and that they were three years in travelling to this place, from the time of their ſetting out from Babylon. When they arrived, they were treated with great humanity by the natives, and allowed every indulgence in both religious and temporal concerns. In proceſs of time they grew ſo wealthy as to purchaſe the little kingdom of Cranganore. Hamilton makes them increaſe to 80,000 families; but in his days they were reduced to 4000. They eſtabliſhed a commonwealth,

commonwealth, and ſelected the two ſons of one of the firſt families, eminent for their wiſdom, to govern them jointly. One of them, inſtigated by ambition, murdered his brother, after which the commonwealth became a democracy, and their territory many centuries ago returned into the hands of the natives.

Powerful as they were, they are at preſent very poor and few. Numbers of them had removed to Goa, where they were greatly encouraged by the Zamorin of the time. They have to this day a ſynagogue near the King's palace, at a ſmall diſtance from Cochin, where are preſerved their records, engraven on copper-plates in Hebrew characters; and when any of the characters decay, they are new cut, ſo that they can ſhew their hiſtory from the reign of Nebuchadnezzar to the preſent time. The Mæcenas of Malabar, M. von Rheede, cauſed theſe records to be tranſlated into Low Dutch—the peruſal would be very deſirable.

CURIOUS SYMPATHY.

NERO's love of ſympathy made him anxious to be applauded on the ſtage as a fiddler and a buffoon. Tiberius baniſhed one of his philoſophical courtiers, and perſecuted him till the unfortunate man laid violent hands upon himſelf, merely becauſe he had diſcovered that the Emperor read books in the morning, to prepare himſelf with queſtions for his literary ſociety at night. Dionyſius, the tyrant of Syracuſe, ſued in the moſt abject manner for an Olympic crown, and ſent a critic to the gallies for finding fault with his verſes. Had not theſe men a ſufficient deſire for the ſympathy of their fellow creatures?

FAMILY SEPULCHRES.

MR. PENNANT ſpeaks of a magnificent tomb, founded by Fitz Ally, as a family ſepulchre. The centre building is covered with an elegant dome. He was like the founders of many of the Egyptian pyramids, diſappointed of his hopes in both of his ſplendid piles. Both the monarchs of Egypt and the Indian prince built, as Job expreſſes it—deſolate places for themſelves!

AN ANECDOTE.

IN 1707, towards the cloſe of the war of ſucceſſion to the crown of Spain, between Philip V. and the Archduke Charles, the inhabitants of Saragoſſa being much alarmed at the advance of an army from France, under the command of the Duke of Orleans, the Count de Puebla, to keep the people quiet, made them believe that the reports were falſe, and even that the camp which appeared was nothing more than a phantom raiſed by magic: upon which the clergy went in proceſſion on the ramparts, and from thence, after a number of prayers, exorciſed the pretended ſpectres then in ſight. The credulous people were not undeceived till the huſſars, after purſuing a guard of cavalry as far as the gates of the city, cut off ſeveral heads, on which they opened the gates, and ſubmitted to the Duke.

Anſwer, by G. *England, of Uplyme, to* G. *Coulman's Charade, inſerted March* 24.

I Find your lovely Nancy's eyes
Are BLACK as any ſloe;
And quick as vivid lighting flies
They turn to gaze on you.

Her head is cover'd with a CAP,
And modeſt curls of hair;
Surely it yields me no ſurprize,
That ſhe did you enſnare.

*** We have received the like anſwer from W. Harris, Jun. of Exeter; John King, and R. Andrews, of Kingſbridge; Serjeant Whittle, of the Upway Volunteers; T. T. of Bridgewater; Philom. of Teingmouth; J. Ball, Jun. and N. Knott, of Taunton; J. Wyatt, of Gittiſham ſchool; J. R. Toulmin, of Barnſtaple; R. Towning, of Fivehead; and T. Jarvis, of Malborough.

Anſwer, by T. Whicker, of Exeter, to R. Thomas's Rebus, inſerted March 31.

ALL-HONOUR'D HAY! exalted be thy name,
And as thy valour ſhone, ſo ſhine thy fame!
Britannia's boaſt! for her thou dy'dſt to ſave;

Hiſtoria! with delighted mien diſplays,
To future years, and chiefs of other days,
That Hay died noble, for he e'er was brave.

☞ We have received the like anſwer from Serjeant Aſh, of the Exminſter Volunteers; Edward, of Truro; Serjeant Whittle, of the Upway Volunteers; and W. Harris, Jun. and P. Gove, of Exon.

A CHARADE, *by W. Harris, Jun. of Exeter.*

ITS from my firſt the food's deriv'd
By which we chiefly are ſuſtain'd;
Go ſearch, ingenious youths, you'll find
That in my ſecond 'tis contain'd.

Theſe parts, when join'd aright, will ſhew
One of the feather'd race. Adieu.

A QUESTION, *by J. Smith, of the Royal Artillery, Plymouth Dock.*

THE thickneſs of the metal of a concave braſs ball = to half an inch.—Required its outſide diameter, ſo as to ſink to its centre in common water, ſuppoſing the weight of the braſs to the water as 8 to 1?

☞ *In anſwer to ſeveral correſpondents who complain of the non-inſertion of their communications, we think it ſufficient to obſerve, that when they ſend ſuch articles as are deſerving publication, they will be duly attended to as ſoon as convenient after they are received; but it would be inſulting our readers to inſert ſuch trifling and incorrect pieces of proſe and poetry as we are too often troubled with.*

*** *The author of the poem on the burial of a volunteer, inſerted June 2, wiſhes to correct the error unintentionally introduced into that piece, by the inſertion of five lines from Blair, by ſaying that they were intended as an appropriate motto; and hopes that the inſertion of them without inverted commas will be pardoned by the numerous readers of the Entertainer, as it was very far from his intention to obtrude on the world five lines as his own which are the production of an abler pen.*

POETRY.

For the WEEKLY ENTERTAINER.

BUCKFAST ABBEY*: *A* POEM.

AS late the moon, deſcending in a cloud,
Left nature in obſcurity and night,
The midnight muſe, clad in a ſable ſhroud,
Reſtrain'd wild fancy in her rapid flight.

Borne forward by the melancholy maid
I wander'd ſlowly from my native home;
Unaw'd by danger, or nocturnal dread,
Or the ſtrange terrors of ſepulchral gloom.

Advancing ſtill, where Dart meand'ring flows,
An ivy-mantled ſtructure did appear;
When inſtantaneouſly to view aroſe
The tow'r, contiguous to the abbey drear.

Directed by a taper's feeble gleam,
I mov'd acroſs the venerable pile;
Where nought is heard but the hoarſe night-bird's ſcream
Reverberating thro' each long-drawn aiſle.

The maſſy walls where circling ivies fold,
Reſiſt deſtruction, menac'd by old time;
The time-worn tower, tremendous to behold,
Still frowns in grandeur awfully ſublime.

Tho' moſſy pillars and rude arches ſtand,
And have the teſt of num'rous years defied;
Yet dreadful marks of time's rapacious hand,
And ruin's rage are every where deſcry'd.

Theſe ſtrong-built columns, and this lofty dome,
The taſte and ſtrength of Gothic art expreſs;
The Popiſh prieſts and bigots erſt would come,
Bow to the image, and the ſaint addreſs.

At length, our forefathers, gall'd by the yoke,
And uſurpations of the church of Rome;
Diſclaim'd the prieſtly check, and broke
Its ſavage fetters, and revok'd their doom.

The thunders of the vatican in vain,
Iſſued with vengeance, ſounded in their ears;
Bulls

* Buckfaſt Abbey lies in the village of Buckfaſt, and pariſh of Buckfaſtleigh, about two miles from Aſhburton.

Bulls and anathemas they did diſdain,
And combated their bigoted compeers.

In this religious and eventful ſtriſe
The monſter popery they did deſtroy;
And by a gen'rous ſacrifice of life
Purchas'd thoſe bleſſings which we now enjoy.

Thoſe venerated fathers were expell'd,
Who to this hallow'd fabrick did repair;
The portico would no protection yield,
Tho' murderers erſt found an aſylum there.

E'er ſince that barb'rous, ſuperſtitious age,
Much of the edifice has brav'd decay;
The antique tow'r, in ſpite of time's wild rage,
Frowns ſtern defiance at the preſent day.

The maſſive walls with ivy are enſhrin'd,
And mock the fury of the daring ſtorm;
And fancy pictures to the ſerious mind
Their priſtine greatneſs and extenſive form.

Ceaſe now, my muſe, expand thy mournful plume;
Oh! waft me quickly from the abbey drear;
Inveſted with a ſuperſtitious gloom,
Unuſual ſounds and ſhrieks invade my ear.

Here oft (I'm fill'd with horror and diſmay)
Dire ſpectres at this awful hour reſort;
Here phantoms range, and light-wing'd elfins play;
Here goblins gambol, and briſk fairies ſport.

Adieu ye walls! farewell thou haunted tow'r!
And each rude veſtige of antiquity!
Hence forth in gloom, and ſullen grandeur lour,
And elemental violence defy.

WILLIAM HOARE, Junior.

Dean Prior.

SONNET *to* LOVE.

FROM ſcenes where noiſe and folly ſtill preſide,
Come, ſoft-ey'd love! and lead me to thy bow'r,
Where gentle ſtreams in peaceful murmurs glide,
And dreams of bliſs employ the paſſing hour.

Yes, deareſt maid! thy all-ſubduing form
Can gild with bliſs ideal ſcenes below;
Can check the horrors of the driving ſtorm,
And fling a tranſitory gleam on woe.

The frowns of fortune, and the loſs of friends,
Prove thee the ſureſt antidote for care;
Before thy beams misfortune's brow unbends,
And hope, time's proſpect, paints with colours fair.

The goddeſs chaſte deſcends, immortal and divine,
And round my glowing brows thy genial bays entwine.